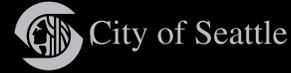
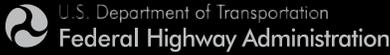


The Alaskan Way Viaduct & Seawall Replacement Project

06.06



What other options were evaluated?

Bored Tunnel

The cut-and-cover tunnel and elevated structure were chosen by WSDOT, the City of Seattle, and FHWA out of an original list of 76 concepts. Replacing the viaduct is a major project that will dramatically affect a critical transportation route through Seattle. Since this is a significant decision, ideas continue coming in, and people ask us to reconsider concepts previously eliminated. We have made diligent efforts to evaluate the promising suggestions. **This fact sheet is one in a series that describes a proposed idea, how it was evaluated, and why the project team determined it's not the best solution.** We cannot afford to wait forever to replace the viaduct and seawall, but public input is very important. When a final decision is made on a solution for replacing the viaduct, we want the public to understand how we came to that conclusion.

Why was a bored tunnel proposed?

We hear several reasons why people believe it is the right solution:

- A bored tunnel would keep the viaduct open during most of construction.
- If we bored a tunnel under downtown, it would be less risky than building a tunnel through weak fill soil along the waterfront. Boring a tunnel inland would also protect the sensitive shoreline area.



A bored tunnel would make it difficult to access downtown Seattle.

What are some of the issues?

- **High risks and costs.** To construct this kind of tunnel could cost between \$8 and \$12 billion, which does not include the cost of fixing the seawall. The size of this tunnel, which would be required to accommodate two to three lanes in each direction, would likely exceed the size of any bored tunnels constructed in the United States. Since it's never been done before, there's a higher chance that we'll run into unexpected problems. A cut-and-cover tunnel is a better-tested technology that has been used in the Battery Street Tunnel and I-90 tunnel.
- **Difficulty accessing downtown.** A bored tunnel, because of Seattle's hilly topography, would extend from the stadiums to Seattle Center. This would make it convenient for getting through downtown, but not getting

What did we study?

When members of the public propose an option, it is often just an idea they've had. We need a specific design or concept to evaluate. For this idea, we evaluated the following concept:

- Replace the viaduct with twin bored, or drilled, tunnels under the existing Alaskan Way surface street, Elliott Bay, or downtown.

to downtown. Because more than one-third of the trips currently using the viaduct use the ramps at Elliott and Western Avenues, additional tunneling for those on-ramps and off-ramps or surface street provisions would be needed. The cut-and-cover tunnel would maintain ramps at Elliott and Western.



Drilling a bored tunnel through downtown would be far riskier than building a cut-and-cover tunnel.

- **It is not possible to avoid a major construction project on the waterfront.** Construction will still be necessary to fix the seawall, and relocate utilities under or near the viaduct. We will also need large areas for construction vehicles and staging regardless of the exact project location.
- **It is not possible to avoid closing the viaduct for a period of time during construction.** Although a bored tunnel might decrease the overall amount of time the viaduct is closed, the intensity of traffic

disruption would be the same or slightly worse. Drilling through downtown would displace many businesses and residents, and disrupt commuter patterns. In addition, the south and north ends of SR 99, which would not be immersed in a tunnel, need to be replaced regardless. This will require some period of construction closures.

For More Information:

Visit the Web site at:

www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct

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